

intestinal protozoa of Arizona. Dr. Herbert G. Johnstone of the Institute staff, discussed "The Chemotherapy of *Dirofilaria immitis*." Studies of leprosy in Brazil were outlined by Dr. Hamilton H. Anderson and others.

"Glucose Tolerance in Rat Leprosy," a paper presented by Dr. George A. Emerson of the West Virginia University School of Medicine, was discussed by Dr. Chauncey D. Leake, professor of pharmacology in the University of California Medical School.

The Gorgas Memorial Laboratory at Panama, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, England, the Rockefeller Foundations in Athens, Greece, and Rome, Italy, and a number of university medical schools were represented at the meeting.

Contamination of Domestic Water Supplies.—Studies made by the United States Bureau of Mines, Department of the Interior, in coöperation with the Kansas State Board of Health, have emphasized that the casing in producing oil wells must be kept in proper condition and abandoned wells must be plugged by methods suitable to the conditions in the individual wells and in the formations they have penetrated if fresh-water supplies and oil and gas resources are to be protected. Salient points pertaining to mineral contamination of fresh-water supplies through inadequate plugging methods or faulty casing have been presented in a brief and elementary discussion prepared by Ludwig Schmidt and C. J. Wilhelm, petroleum engineers of the Bureau of Mines. The authors of this informative pamphlet conclude that the abandoning and plugging of each well is a separate problem, but show that methods are available which, if used in accordance with good engineering practice, should reduce to a marked degree the mineral contamination of fresh-water supplies by subsurface brines.

Following prefatory statements regarding the composition of oil-field brines and their effect on animal and vegetable life, the sources from which waters high in mineral content enter fresh-water supplies are described. These are dealt with in two general classes, namely, subsurface and surface sources. Methods of plugging are discussed, and simple illustrations show types of improper plugs that allow depletion or mineral contamination of fresh-water sands. The booklet discusses the judicious use of mud fluids and cement and their limitations, and shows how faulty casing, either improperly seated or corroded, may permit brines to migrate to fresh-water or oil-producing horizons.

Copies of this booklet of fifteen pages and five illustrations are being distributed by the Kansas State Board of Health, Lawrence, Kansas, in accordance with a coöperative agreement with the Bureau of Mines pertaining to the disposal of oil-field brines.

LETTERS

Concerning health education by radio.

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

BUREAU OF HEALTH AND PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

To the Editor:—A short time ago we announced in a special letter to local societies a new departure in health education by radio, namely, the dramatization of programs over a network of the National Broadcasting Company. At first it was not apparent that this would be broadcast farther west than Denver, but the program has actually been broadcast on a nation-wide network, including a short-wave broadcast over W8XK (Pittsburgh).

We asked that this program be announced in local bulletins and thus emphasized for the information of physicians.

As this is written, there have been five broadcasts and the audience mail response has been of such an enthusiastic character that we feel justified in asking you to make a special effort locally to get paragraphs about the program in newspaper columns by radio editors. . . .

It has been demonstrated that radio, itself an advertising medium, cannot stand alone but must be supplemented by other publicity media.

W. W. BAUER, M. D.

Concerning cyanide antidotes.

To the Editor:—The following is an excerpt from an article on "Cyanide Antidotes and Medical Progress" published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* under date of November 2, 1935. Perhaps this may be of interest to you.

"Eventually J. C. Geiger, health official of San Francisco, acting on the recommendation of Hanzlik and Richardson, demonstrated the humanitarian value of this comparatively old, yet recent, discovery. (This refers to the use of methylene blue in cyanide poisoning.) This single clinical experiment has deservedly earned a widespread approbation. In one sweep it confirmed the value of controlled experimental procedure, saved human life, and marked progress in medical science. These striking events have moved so suddenly that their full significance for medicine cannot be measured yet. But it is already apparent that many investigations of oxidation-reduction dyes, of methemoglobin agents and processes, and of related problems, have been stimulated the world over. Apparently nothing need be too remote or unsuspected to illuminate the dim crossings and byways on the great highway of medical progress."

J. C. GEIGER, M. D., *Director.*

Office of Director of Public Health,
City and County of San Francisco.

Concerning a seventeenth-century comment on empiric practitioners.

October 14, 1935.

To the Editor:—The following excerpt, under the heading "Quacks: Yesterday, Today, and Forever," from the preface to a book printed in 1685, might interest the readers of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE.

Very truly,

HYMAN MILLER, M. D.

1136 West Sixth Street, Los Angeles.

Quotation follows:

"But some will say, Why should you translate so Excellent a Book, and make it common to the Silly and Unlearned Quacks? My answer is, That 'tis come to that pass now, that their Numbers can hardly be increased by translating of Books, or any other means, and seeing this Nation is so unhappy, as to swarm with those Miscreants after such a rate, and no hopes of diminishing their Numbers, but by a new Act of Parliament (which God put into the Hearts of this Excellent, Loyal Wise Senate, that we are to be suddenly blessed with,) I judged it no small Act of Charity (seeing they are no way hindered to Practice) to inform them better, that thereby I might conduce to the saving of many lives, which by their Ignorance they would otherwise inevitably destroy. And now, that it comes to my Mind, I would have the World, but especially every good and charitable Member of the ensuing Parliament, take notice, that by a just and easy Computation, which I have often made, and am still ready to make, upon any good occasion, it is found, that all the Plagues that happen'd in England, have not destroyed as many, as the Quacks and Empyricks of this Nation. Let him therefore that would avert the Plague, if in his Power, by a stronger Reason endeavor to avert this greater Mischief; Which is in itself possible; in the mean time the best thing Physicians can do, will be to inform them what they can, to prevent (what in them lies) their destroying of the King's good Subjects; for seeing the Nation is topfull of them, that it cannot well be more stocked with them, that is (as I said before) the only Remedy left (in some measure) to prevent the Murders. I had, to confess the plain truth, another Reason which induced me to translate this Book, and it was To get a little Money, which otherwise I could not do by my Profession, because of the Quacks; and to make my Market the better, I chose the best of Books, or I should have been no wise Trader, and had my Labour for my Pains, which I could not fear in translating so Excellent and Useful a Book. Which I have made somewhat the more so, by explaining at large all the Chymical and other difficult Characters contained therein, and by manifesting the Sense of many difficult places."

From "An Introduction to the Whole Practice of Physick—Shewing the Natures and Faculties of Medicines, the Reason and Manner of their Operations, and to what Particular Parts they are appropriated. Directing the more Unskilful in the true Method of Physick; according to the most successful Practice of several Modern Physicians in General and of the late Famous Dr.